3.11 Communications

3.11.1 Sources of Information

Information was obtained from field observations, from discussions with City of Sumas personnel, and from the Electric Power Research Institute.

3.11.2 Existing Conditions

Telephone service to the site and adjacent properties is provided by GTE Systems of the Northwest. At the site, telephone lines are located underground. In nearby residential neighborhoods, telephone lines are strung on wooden poles.

The City of Sumas has a cable television system, with dish type antennas located approximately 300 to 400 yards north of the project site. The dish type antennas are generally pointed south and approximately 60 degrees above the horizon.

3.11.3 Environmental Impacts of Proposed Action

3.11.3.1 Construction

During construction, excavations for the natural gas pipeline or the water or sewer lines could potentially damage underground utilities, including communications cables. The contractor will be required to use the state "One-Call" system to locate and mark utilities prior to construction, and coordinate with local utility providers.

3.11.3.2 Operation

The existing communications infrastructure located at the industrial park is expected to be adequate to handle the anticipated needs of SE2GF during construction and operation. Should upgrades to this infrastructure be required, they would be completed by SE2 or by the communications service provider funded by SE2. Any future upgrading that might be required would be done in a manner that would not interfere with City communication facilities.

The City's incoming cable television signal from the satellite is a frequency-modulated (FM) signal in the 10 to 20 GHz range that would not be susceptible to induced interference from the 230 kV transmission facility. Emissions generated by the 230 kV transmission facilities would be amplitude-modulated (AM) signals, and therefore would not interfere with the incoming FM television signals. Any future interference that may occur to AM signals in the S2GF vicinity would be rectified by SE2.

In addition, the S2GF substation and 230 kV transmission lines would be well outside of the transmission path of the City's FM television signals. The FM television signals are highly directional. Therefore, based on the distance of the antennas above the horizon, there would not be an occasion for the 230 kV transmission facilities to directly interfere with the television transmission path.

The future design of the two 115 kV transmission lines (should they be built) would include provisions to minimize interference with AM radio and FM radio/TV reception along the routes. Should any future reception problems occur after construction of those lines that could be attributed to them, the utility which owned the lines would be responsible to rectify such problems.

3.11.4 Environmental Impacts of No Action

There would be no impact to communications from the No Action Alternative.

3.11.5 Mitigation Measures

3.11.5.1 Construction

During construction, precautions will be used to ensure that excavations do not damage underground utilities, including communications cables. The "One-Call" system will be used to locate and mark utilities prior to construction, and to coordinate with local utility providers.

3.11.5.2 Operation

No mitigation measures are required for operation.

3.11.6 Cumulative Impacts

The development of the site, and the installation of communication equipment (telephones and computer connections) would contribute minimally to an increase in the need for communication services in the Sumas area.

3.11.7 Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

No significant unavoidable adverse impacts would occur to communications from the construction or operation of this project.